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1. Definitions and Scope

1.1. A *Home Inspection* is a non-invasive, visual examination of a residential dwelling, performed for a fee, which is designed to identify observed material defects within specific components of said dwelling. Components may include any combination of mechanical, structural, electrical, plumbing, or other essential systems or portions of the home, as identified and agreed to by the Client and Inspector, prior to the inspection process.

I. A home inspection is intended to assist in evaluation of the overall condition of the dwelling. The inspection is based on observation of the visible and apparent condition of the structure and its components on the date of the inspection, and not the prediction of future conditions.

II. A home inspection will not reveal every concern that exists or ever could exist, but only those material defects observed on the day of the inspection.

III. A home inspection can include a survey and/or analysis of energy flows and usage in a residential property if the client requests it.

1.2. A *Material Defect* is a condition of a residential real property, or any portion of it, that would have a significant, adverse impact on the value of the real property, or that involves an unreasonable risk to people on the property. The fact that a structural element, system or subsystem is near, at or beyond the end of the normal useful life of such a structural element, system or subsystem is not by itself a material defect.

1.3. An *Inspection Report* shall describe and identify, in written format, the inspected systems, structures, and components of the dwelling, and shall identify material defects observed. Inspection reports may contain recommendations regarding conditions reported or recommendations for correction, monitoring or further evaluation by professionals, but this is not required.

2. 61-30.801 Standards of Practice, General.

(1) Home inspections performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the client with information regarding the overall condition of installed systems and components of the home based on observation of the visible and apparent condition of the structure and components at the time of the home inspection and to report on those systems and components inspected that, in the professional opinion of the inspector, are significantly deficient or at the end of their service lives. A home inspection does not include the prediction of future conditions.

(2) These standards shall not be construed as limiting the scope of the inspection process in those areas where the inspector is qualified and/or has special knowledge.

(3) The inspector shall inspect readily accessible, installed systems and components of homes listed in these Standards of Practice by using normal operating controls and opening readily operable access panels. Where multiple instances of the same component exist, a representative number shall be inspected.

(4) The inspector shall inspect and report as required by Section 468.8323, F.S., when required by these standards, systems or components by their type and/or significant characteristics.

(5) If not self-evident to the client at the time of inspection, the inspector shall give a reason why, in his or her opinion, the system or component was reported as significantly deficient or near the end of its service life.

(6) The inspector shall make recommendations for correction and/or monitoring, or further evaluation of the deficiencies that the inspector observed.

(7) These Standards of Practice do not limit inspectors from:

(a) Including other inspection services, in addition to those required by these Standards of Practice;

(b) Specifying repairs, provided the inspector is appropriately qualified;

(c) Excluding systems and components from the inspection if agreed upon in writing by the inspector and client.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.802 Standards of Practice, Structure.

(1) Structural system and components include the following:

(a) Foundation;

(b) Floor structure;

(c) Wall structure;

(d) Ceiling structure;

(e) Roof structure;

(f) Posts;

(g) Beams;

(h) Columns;

(j) Joists;

(k) Rafters;

(l) Trusses;

(m) Other framing; and

(n) Ventilation of foundation areas.

(2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible structural systems and components by probing structural components where deterioration is visible or suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is not required when, in the opinion of the inspector, probing would only further damage any area already identified as defective or where no deterioration is visible or presumed to exist.

(3) The inspector is not required to enter or traverse any under-floor crawl space or attic, if in the opinion of the inspector:

(a) An unsafe or unsanitary condition exists;

(b) Enter areas in which inadequate clearance exists to allow the inspector safe entry or traversing;

(c) The potential exists to cause damage to insulation, ductwork, other components or stored items.

(4) The inspector is not required to provide any engineering or architectural services or offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any structural system or component.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.803 Standards of Practice, Electrical Systems.

(1) Electrical systems and components include the following:

(a) Service entrance conductors, drip loop, cables, and raceways;

- (b) Main service equipment and main disconnects;
- (c) Service grounding;
- (d) Interior components of main service panels and sub panels;
- (e) Conductors;
- (f) Over current protection devices;
- (g) Readily accessible installed lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles;
- (h) Ground fault circuit interrupters;
- (i) Amperage and voltage rating of electrical service;
- (j) Main disconnect(s);
- (k) Methods or types of wiring;
- (l) Smoke detectors;
- (m) Carbon monoxide detectors;
- (n) Arc fault circuit interrupters.

(2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible electrical systems and components.

(3) The inspector is not required to inspect:

- (a) Remote control devices;
 - (b) Security alarm systems and components;
 - (c) Low voltage wiring, systems and components, ancillary wiring and systems and components not a part of the primary electrical power distribution system;
 - (d) Generators, photovoltaic solar collectors or battery or electrical storage devices and associated equipment.
- (4) The inspector is not required to:
- (a) Measure amperage, voltage or impedance;
 - (b) Perform a load calculation;
 - (c) Insert any tool, probe, or device into any electrical component;
 - (d) Determine the accuracy of circuit labeling.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.804 Standards of Practice, HVAC Systems.

(1) HVAC systems and components include heating and air conditioning systems and components and HVAC distribution systems and components.

(2) Heating and air conditioning systems and components.

(a) The heating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and components include the following:

1. Installed heating equipment;
2. Fuel storage and fuel distribution systems;
3. Vent systems, flues, and chimneys;
4. Ductwork and air distribution components;
5. Mechanical ventilation systems;
6. Heating system energy source(s);
7. Heating system capacity in BTUs or kilowatts.

(b) The inspector shall inspect all readily accessible heating and air conditioning systems and components.

(c) The inspector is not required to inspect:

1. Interiors of flues or chimneys which are not readily accessible;
2. Heat exchangers;
3. Humidifiers or dehumidifiers;
4. Electronic air filters, sanitizers, or UV lights;
5. Solar space heating systems;
6. Internal components such as coils and pans.

(3) HVAC distribution systems and components.

(a) The heating and air conditioning (HVAC) distribution systems and components include the following:

1. Energy source;
2. Cooling method by its distinguishing characteristics;
3. The presence of condensate over flow warning/shutoff devices.

(b) The inspector shall inspect readily accessible HVAC distribution systems.

(c) With regards to HVAC distribution systems, the inspector is not required to inspect:

1. Electronic air filters, sanitizers, or UV lights;
2. Humidistat's;
3. Automatic HVAC zoned systems, dampers, controls, that are not readily accessible;

4. Removable window air conditioning systems.

(3) The inspector is not required to:

(a) Determine heat supply adequacy or distribution balance;

(b) Operate heat pump systems when ambient temperatures pose the potential for damage to the air conditioning system;

(c) Determine cooling supply adequacy, distribution balance or indoor air quality;

(d) Operate the air conditioning system when ambient temperatures pose the potential for damage to the air conditioning system.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13. **61-30.805 Standards of Practice, Roof Covering.**

(1) Roof covering systems and components include the following:

(a) Roofing materials;

(b) Flashings;

(c) Skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations;

(d) Roof drainage systems;

(e) Ventilation of attics; and

(f) Insulation of attics.

(2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible roof covering systems and components.

(3) The inspector is not required to inspect:

(a) Components or systems that are not readily accessible;

(b) Antenna or other installed accessories;

(c) Interiors of flues or chimneys which are not readily accessible.

(4) The inspector is not required to walk on the roof surface when, in the opinion of the inspector, the following conditions exist:

(a) Roof slope is excessive to safely walk on;

(b) There is no safe access to the roof;

(c) Climatic conditions render the roof unsafe to walk on;

(d) Condition of the roofing material or roof decking renders the roof unsafe to walk on;

(e) Walking on the roof may cause damage to the roof covering materials; and

(f) Walking will place any liability or danger to the homeowner or other representatives involved in the home inspection process.

(5) The inspector is not required to disturb insulation.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.806 Standards of Practice, Plumbing System.

(1) Plumbing systems and components include the following:

(a) Interior water supply piping and distribution systems including all fixtures, faucets, and components;

(b) Drain, waste and vent systems, including all plumbing fixtures;

(c) Plumbing related vent systems, flues, and chimneys;

(d) Drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping;

(e) Materials used for water supply, drain, waste, and vent piping;

(f) Water heating equipment including the energy source;

(g) Main water and main fuel shut-off valves.

(2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible plumbing systems and components.

(3) The inspector is not required to inspect:

(a) Wells or water storage related equipment;

(b) Water conditioning systems;

(c) Solar water heating systems;

(d) Fire sprinkler systems;

(e) Private waste disposal systems;

(f) Irrigation system(s).

(4) The inspector is not required to:

(a) Test shower pans, tub and shower surround for leakage;

(b) Operate safety valves or shut-off valves;

(c) Determine whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private;

(d) Determine the quantity or quality of the water supply, or if the function flow at the time of the inspection or thereafter will meet the client's needs.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.807 Standards of Practice, Interior Components.

(1) The interior components that shall be inspected include the following:

- (a) Interior walls, ceilings, and floors;
- (b) Steps, stairways, and railings;
- (c) Countertops and representative number of installed cabinets;
- (d) Garage doors;
- (e) Interior and exterior doors and windows and their operating locks and latches or other opening mechanisms;
- (f) Insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces;
- (g) Fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances;
- (h) Vent systems, flues, and chimneys;
- (i) Household appliances.

(2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible interior components. When inspecting doors and windows, the inspector may inspect a representative number of doors and windows. The inspector shall inspect household appliances for normal operation – using normal operating controls to activate a primary function. Inspectors will not operate systems or appliances with owners' belongings, or if there is a risk to the property being inspected. Inspectors will first review the system to be operated and use professional judgment as to whether it is safe to operate using normal operating controls and report accordingly.

(3) The inspector is not required to inspect:

- (a) Paint, wallpaper, window treatments, and other specialty finish treatments;
- (b) Carpeting;
- (c) Window treatments;
- (d) Central vacuum systems;
- (e) Recreational facilities;
- (f) Fire screens and doors, if not permanently attached;
- (g) Seals and gaskets on fireplaces;
- (h) Automatic fuel feed devices;
- (i) Mantles and fireplace surrounds;
- (j) Combustion make-up air devices;
- (k) Heat distribution assists whether gravity controlled or fan assisted in fireplaces.

(4) The inspector is not required to:

- (a) Open or operate any windows or doors and access covers that are permanently or temporarily secured by mechanical means, are painted shut, or are blocked by stored items or furniture;
- (b) Ignite or extinguish fires;
- (c) Light gas fireplaces or heaters, or other unlit pilot light devices;
- (d) Determine draft characteristics for fireplaces and chimneys;
- (e) Move fireplace inserts or stoves or firebox contents;
- (f) Disturb insulation;
- (g) Activate any system or appliance that is shut down, disconnected, or otherwise rendered inoperable;
- (h) Operate or evaluate any system, component or appliance that does not respond to normal user controls;
- (i) Operate any gas appliance that requires the manual lighting of a pilot light or burner device;
- (j) Operate any system, appliance or feature that requires the use of special codes, keys, combinations, or devices or where user manual reference is required;
- (k) Operate any system, component, or appliance where in the opinion of the inspector, damage may occur;
- (l) Determine thermostat(s) calibration, adequacy of heating elements, operate or evaluate self cleaning cycles, door seals, indicator lights, timers, clocks or timed features, defrost cycles or frost free features, or other specialist features as it applies to the appliance device;
- (m) Determine leakage from microwaves ovens;
- (n) Determine the presence or operation of back draft damper devices in exhaust devices;
- (o) Move any appliance;
- (p) Confirm operation of every control or feature of a system or appliance.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.810 Standards of Practice, Exterior Components.

(1) Exterior systems and components include the following:

- (a) Exterior wall cladding/siding, flashing and trim;
- (b) All exterior doors;
- (c) Attached decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and their associated railings;
- (d) Eaves, soffits and fascias where accessible from the ground level;
- (e) Walkways, patios, and driveways leading to the dwelling entrances;

(f) Garages and carports.

(2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible exterior systems and components.

(3) The inspector is not required to inspect:

(a) Window and door screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal or protective accessories and devices;

(b) Fences;

(c) Recreational facilities;

(d) Outbuildings, with the exception of garages and carports;

(e) Swimming pools, seawalls, break-walls, boat lifts and/or docks.

(4) The inspector is not required to move furniture, appliances, lawn and garden equipment, tools, stored items, wall decorations, floor covering, clothing or any items that block the view and access to components or structures.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.811 Standards of Practice, Site Conditions that Affect the Structure.

(1) Site conditions that affect the structure include the following:

(a) Vegetation;

(b) Grading;

(c) Surface drainage; and

(d) Retaining walls on the property when any of these are likely to adversely affect the structure.

(2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible site conditions that affect the structure.

(3) The inspector is not required to inspect:

(a) Geological, geotechnical or hydrological site conditions;

(b) Erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

3. Limitations, Exceptions & Exclusions

3.1. Limitations:

I. An inspection is not technically exhaustive.

II. An inspection will not identify concealed or latent defects.

III. An inspection will not deal with aesthetic concerns or what could be deemed matters of taste, cosmetic defects, etc.

IV. An inspection will not determine the suitability of the property for any use.

V. An inspection does not determine the market value of the property or its marketability.

VI. An inspection does not determine the insurability of the property.

VII. An inspection does not determine the advisability or inadvisability of the purchase of the inspected property.

VIII. An inspection does not determine the life expectancy of the property or any components or systems therein.

IX. An inspection does not include items not permanently installed.

X. These Standards of Practice apply only to homes with four or fewer dwelling units.

3.2. Exclusions:

I. The inspectors are not required to determine:

A. property boundary lines or encroachments.

B. the condition of any component or system that is not readily accessible.

C. the service life expectancy of any component or system.

D. the size, capacity, BTU, performance, or efficiency of any component or system.

E. the cause or reason of any condition.

- F. the cause for the need of repair or replacement of any system or component.
- G. future conditions.
- H. compliance with codes or regulations.
- I. the presence of evidence of rodents, animals or insects.
- J. the presence of mold, mildew or fungus.
- K. the presence of air-borne hazards.
- L. the presence of birds.
- M. the presence of other flora or fauna.
- N. the air quality.
- O. the existence of asbestos.
- P. the existence of environmental hazards.
- Q. the existence of electro-magnetic fields.
- R. the presence of hazardous materials including, but not limited to, the presence of lead in paint.
- S. any hazardous waste conditions.
- T. any manufacturer's recalls or conformance with manufacturer installation, or any information included for consumer protection purposes.
- U. operating costs of systems.
- V. replacement or repair cost estimates.
- W. the acoustical properties of any systems.
- X. estimates of the cost to operating any given system.

II. The inspectors are not required to operate:

- A. any system that is shut down.
- B. any system that does not function properly.
- C. or evaluate low-voltage electrical systems such as, but not limited to:
 - 1. phone lines;
 - 2. cable lines;
 - 3. antennae;
 - 4. lights; or
 - 5. remote controls.
- D. any system that does not turn on with the use of normal operating controls.
- E. any shut-off valves or manual stop valves.
- F. any electrical disconnect or over current protection devices.
- G. any alarm systems.
- H. moisture meters, gas detectors or similar equipment.

III. The inspectors are not required to:

- A. move any personal items or other obstructions, such as, but not limited to:
 - 1. throw rugs;
 - 2. furniture;
 - 3. floor or wall coverings;
 - 4. ceiling tiles;
 - 5. window coverings;
 - 6. equipment;
 - 7. plants;
 - 8. ice;
 - 9. debris;
 - 10. snow;
 - 11. water;
 - 12. dirt;
 - 13. foliage; or
 - 14. pets.

- B. dismantle, open, or uncover any system or component.
- C. enter or access any area which may, in the opinion of the inspector, be unsafe.
- D. enter crawlspaces or other areas that are unsafe or not readily accessible.
- E. inspect underground items such as, but not limited to, underground storage tanks or other indications of their presence, whether abandoned or actively used.
- F. do anything which, in the inspector's opinion, is likely to be unsafe or dangerous to the inspector or others, or damage property, such as, but not limited to: walking on roof surfaces, climbing ladders, entering attic spaces, or negotiating with pets.
- G. inspect decorative items.
- H. inspect common elements or areas in multi-unit housing.
- I. inspect intercoms, speaker systems, radio-controlled security devices, or lawn irrigation systems.
- J. offer guarantees or warranties.
- K. offer or perform any engineering services.
- L. offer or perform any trade or professional service other than home inspection.
- M. research the history of the property, report on its potential for alteration, modification, extendibility, or its suitability for a specific or proposed use for occupancy.
- N. determine the age of construction or installation of any system structure or component of a building, or differentiate between original construction and subsequent additions, improvements, renovations or replacements.
- O. determine the insurability of a property.
- P. perform or offer Phase 1 environmental audits.
- Q. inspect on any system or component which is not included in these standards.

4. Glossary of Terms

- 4.1. Accessible: Can be approached or entered by the inspector safely, without difficulty, fear or danger.
- 4.2. Activate: To turn on, supply power, or enable systems, equipment, or devices to become active by normal operating controls. Examples include turning on the gas or water supply valves to the fixtures and appliances, and activating electrical breakers or fuses.
- 4.3. Adversely Affect: To constitute, or potentially constitute, a negative or destructive impact.
- 4.4. Alarm System: Warning devices, installed or freestanding, including, but not limited to: carbon monoxide detectors, flue gas and other spillage detectors, security equipment, ejector pumps and smoke alarms.
- 4.5. Appliance: A household device operated by use of electricity or gas. Not included in this definition are components covered under central heating, central cooling or plumbing.
- 4.6. Architectural Service: Any practice involving the art and science of building design for construction of any structure or grouping of structures, and the use of space within and surrounding the structures or the design, design development, preparation of construction contract documents, and administration of the construction contract.
- 4.7. Component: A permanently installed or attached fixture, element or part of a system.
- 4.8. Condition: The visible and conspicuous state of being of an object.
- 4.9. Crawlspace: The area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the lowest floor structural component.
- 4.10. Decorative: Ornamental; not required for the operation of essential systems and components of a home.
- 4.11. Describe: To report in writing a system or component by its type, or other observed characteristics to distinguish it from other components used for the same purpose.

- 4.12. Determine: To arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to examination.
- 4.13. Dismantle: To open, take apart or remove any component, device or piece that would not typically be opened, taken apart or removed by an ordinary occupant.
- 4.14. Engineering Service: Any professional service or creative work requiring engineering education, training, and experience and the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, physical and engineering sciences to such professional service or creative work as consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, design and supervision of construction for the purpose of assuring compliance with the specifications and design, in conjunction with structures, buildings, machines, equipment, works or processes.
- 4.15. Enter: To go into an area to observe visible components.
- 4.16. Evaluate: To assess the systems, structures or components of a dwelling.
- 4.17. Examine: To visually look. See Inspect.
- 4.18. Foundation: The base upon which the structure or wall rests; usually masonry, concrete, or stone, and generally partially underground.
- 4.19. Function: The action for which an item, component, or system is specially fitted or used, or for which an item, component or system exists; to be in action or perform a task.
- 4.20. Functional: Performing, or able to perform, a function.
- 4.21. Home Inspection: The process by which an inspector visually examines the readily accessible systems and components of a home, and operates those systems and components utilizing these Standards of Practice as a guideline.
- 4.22. Household Appliances: Kitchen and laundry appliances, room air conditioners, and similar appliances.
- 4.23. Inspect: To visually look at readily accessible systems and components safely, using normal operating controls, and accessing readily accessible panels and areas in accordance with these Standards of Practice.
- 4.24. Inspected Property: The readily accessible areas of the buildings, site, items, components, and systems included in the inspection.
- 4.25. Inspector: One who performs a real estate inspection.
- 4.26. Installed: Attached or connected such that the installed item requires a tool for removal.
- 4.27. Material Defect: A condition of a residential real property or any portion of it that would have a significant adverse impact on the value of the real property or that involves an unreasonable risk to people on the property. The fact that a structural element, system or subsystem is near, at or beyond the end of the normal useful life of such a structural element, system or subsystem is not by itself a material defect.
- 4.28. Normal Operating Controls: Devices, such as thermostats that would be operated by ordinary occupants which require no specialized skill or knowledge.
- 4.29. Observe: To see through visually directed attention.
- 4.30. Operate: To cause systems to function or turn on with normal operating controls.
- 4.31. Readily Accessible: An item or component that is, in the judgment of the inspector, capable of being safely observed without the removal of obstacles, detachment or disengagement of connecting or securing devices, or other unsafe or difficult procedures to gain access.

- 4.32. Recreational Facilities: Spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, tennis courts, playground equipment, and other exercise, entertainment or athletic facilities.
- 4.33. Report: A written communication (possibly including images) of any material defects observed during the inspection.
- 4.34. Representative Number: A sufficient number to serve as a typical or characteristic example of the item(s) inspected.
- 4.35. Safety Glazing: Tempered glass, laminated glass, or rigid plastic.
- 4.36. Shut Down: Turned off, unplugged, inactive, not in service, not operational, etc.
- 4.37. Structural Component: A component which supports non-variable forces or weights (dead loads) and variable forces or weights (live loads).
- 4.38. System: An assembly of various components which function as a whole.
- 4.39. Technically Exhaustive: A comprehensive and detailed examination beyond the scope of a real estate home inspection which would involve or include, but would not be limited to: dismantling, specialized knowledge or training, special equipment, measurements, calculations, testing, research, analysis or other means.
- 4.40. Unsafe: A condition in a system or component which is judged to be a significant risk of personal injury during normal, day-to-day use. The risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation, or a change in accepted residential construction standards.
- 4.41. Verify: To confirm or substantiate.

End of Standards of Practice